

# Conclusions



## What does a successful conclusion do?

Your conclusion is the place where you can offer any final thoughts and considerations about your project. There is not one right way to write a conclusion. For example, in a cover letter, you likely want to write a short conclusion that offers a general summary of the skills and qualifications you just discussed in the body of your cover letter. Whereas, if you were writing a lengthy research paper, your conclusion would likely be lengthy too, telling the reader about the implications of the research you just discussed along with possible ways of furthering that research in future projects. Most often, at least in academic writing, conclusions let your reader know why what you just finished discussing in the body of your paper is significant. In addition, your conclusion gives the reader one last chance to gain a sense of your overall purpose for writing. This handout will overview the common moves that writers make in conclusions and give you a sense of when you may make these moves.

## What are some useful strategies for writing successful conclusions?

These are 3 common moves writers make in their conclusion:

- **Focus on the significance of your topic.** Make sure the reader knows why your paper is important. This may involve placing your paper in a larger context or comparing it to a current-day issue.
- **Recommend further research.** Now that you're an expert on this topic, you have the chance to take the next step and consider a course of action for the future. Consider what gaps in the research exist or what the reader may still be curious about at the end of the paper.
- **Synthesize your points.** Rather than simply summarizing your paper, put together the pieces for your reader. How does your argument fit together? What is an easier way to understand your points?

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Now that you have some strategies, you have to decide what strategy would be most useful, and when. Remember to consider:

- **Your audience.** Is this a research paper? If so, then your reader may be expecting you to recommend further research at the end. Is it a history paper? In that case, you may want to talk about the current-day significance of your topic.
- **The complexity of your argument.** If your argument is very complex, then you may want to rehash and synthesize the points of your argument. However, if your paper is short or fairly simple, rehashing your argument would be unnecessary, and even frustrating, for your reader.
- **The focus of your topic.** Remember to keep the focus of your paper consistent throughout, including the conclusion. Consider whether your conclusion over-generalizes or suddenly switches to a broader topic that may not be relevant to the scope of your paper. Instead, ground your conclusion in your topic by making sure it connects to your argument.